

Site Inventory Form
State Historical Society of Iowa
 (December 1, 1999)

State Inventory No. 70-00193 New Supplemental
 Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) _____
 Relationship: Contributing Noncontributing
 Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries
 National Register Status: (any that apply) Listed De-listed NHL DOE
 Review & Compliance No. _____
 Non-Extant (enter year) _____

1. Name of Property

historic name Muscatine City Hall
 other names/site number Field Site #: FS-083

2. Location

street & number 215 Sycamore Street (not 204 E. 3rd Street)
 city or town Muscatine vicinity, county Muscatine
 Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name _____ Township No. _____ Range No. _____ Section _____ Quarter of Quarter _____
 (If Urban) Subdivision Original Town Block(s) 32 Lot(s) 8, 9 & 10

3. State/Federal Agency Certification [Skip this Section]

4. National Park Service Certification [Skip this Section]

5. Classification

Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property		
	If Non-Eligible Property	If Eligible Property, enter number of:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	_____	Contributing <u>1</u>	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	Noncontributing _____	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	<u>1</u>	objects
<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	<u>2</u>	Total

Name of related project report or multiple property study (Enter "N/A" if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).
 Title _____ Historical Architectural Data Base Number _____

Historical and Architectural Survey and Evaluation of the Downtown Commercial District 70-013

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>04B: Government/City Hall</u>	<u>04B: Government/City Hall</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>06C: Late 19th & 20th Century Revival/Classical Revival</u>	foundation <u>10B: Concrete/Poured</u>
_____	walls <u>04C: Stone/Limestone</u>
_____	roof <u>15C: Synthetics/Rubber</u>
_____	other _____

Narrative Description (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" representing your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	A	Property is associated with significant events.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	B	Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	C	Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	D	Property yields significant information in archaeology or history.

County Muscatine Address 215 Sycamore Site Number 70-00193
City Muscatine District Number _____

Criteria Considerations

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B Removed from its original location.
- C A birthplace or grave.
- D A cemetery.
- E A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F A commemorative property.
- G Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

02: Architecture
26: Politics/Government

Significant Dates

Construction date 1914-1915 check if circa or estimated date
Other dates 1913

Significant Person

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

Architect/Builder

Architect J.E. Mills & Sons; Detroit, MI (Henry W. Zeidler – local supervising architect)
Builder James H. Seldon - Contractor

Narrative Statement of Significance SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography See continuation sheet for citations of the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form

10. Geographic Data

UTM References (OPTIONAL)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	_____	_____	2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet for additional UTM references or comments

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jim Rudisill, City of Muscatine (R.L. McCarley, consultant)
organization Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission date October 8, 2004
street & number 215 Sycamore telephone 563-264-1554
city or town Muscatine state Iowa zip code 52761

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION (Submit the following items with the completed form)

FOR ALL PROPERTIES

- Map:** showing the property's location in a town/city or township.
- Site plan:** showing position of buildings and structures on the site in relation to public road(s).
- Photographs:** representative black and white photos. If the photos are taken as part of a survey for which the Society is to be curator of the negatives or color slides, a photo/catalog sheet needs to be included with the negatives/slides and the following needs to be provided below on this particular inventory site:

Roll/slide sheet # _____ Frame/slot # _____ Date Taken _____
Roll/slide sheet # _____ Frame/slot # _____ Date Taken _____
Roll/slide sheet # _____ Frame/slot # _____ Date Taken _____

- See continuation sheet or attached **photo & slide catalog sheet** for list of photo roll or slide entries.
- Photos/illustrations without negatives are also in this site inventory file.

FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF PROPERTIES, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AS WELL

- Farmstead & District:** (List of structures and buildings, known or estimated year built, and contributing or non-contributing status)
- Barn:**
 - A sketch of the frame/truss configuration in the form of drawing a typical middle bent of the barn.
 - A photograph of the loft showing the frame configuration along one side.
 - A sketch floor plan of the interior space arrangements along with the barn's exterior dimensions in feet.

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only Below This Line

Concur with above survey opinion on National Register eligibility: Yes No More Research Recommended
 This is a locally designated property or part of a locally designated district.

Comments: _____

Evaluated by (name/title): _____ Date: _____

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 3

<u>Muscatine City Hall</u> Name of Property	<u>Muscatine</u> County
<u>215 Sycamore Street</u> Address	<u>Muscatine</u> City

7. Narrative Description

Summary

This three-story, Classical Revival building is located at the corner of Sycamore and Third Streets, near the heart of the city's downtown business district and less than three blocks from the Mississippi River. This area has been cited in several studies for its grouping of mid- to late 19th century and early 20th century buildings. The city hall sets in the southeast (rear) corner of a 180' x 140' corner lot that has been graded and then terraced down to the level of the surrounding streets. The front of the lot has been landscaped with a main walkway, two perimeter sidewalks, trees and other vegetation. An 8½-foot tall replica of the Statue of Liberty, a contributing object, sets atop a five-foot stone pedestal within an 11-point, star-shaped stone planter in front of the building. The statue is one of approximately 300 statues that were distributed to communities around the country from 1949-1951 in commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America. The Muscatine piece was donated in 1950. The city hall is in excellent condition. The primary alterations to the exterior of the building have been limited to window and door replacement, excavation on one side of the central entrance steps to provide a handicap accessibility ramp and additional excavation on the north elevation to create a new entrance for the parks department. There has been more extensive interior remodeling, primarily to accommodate new uses.

The city hall was built in 1914-15, following two bond issue referendums. In 1896 an Iowa law was enacted that gave women the right to vote in bond issue elections. Based on newspaper accounts from that time, it appears the city hall vote was the first time women were able to cast ballots in a Muscatine election. The election(s) also marked the first use of an Iowa law allowing special charter cities the size of Muscatine to issue bonds to construct municipal buildings.

Exterior

General Exterior/Ground

The Muscatine City Hall is a three-story public building with Classical Revival features. The structure is steel and brick with an exterior cladding of smooth Bedford limestone. Construction on the building was started in 1914 and completed in 1915. The structure incorporates two 90-foot long wings (east & west) to create a basic L-shaped footprint, with a curved, two-story, full-height portico set within the interior right angle formed by the two wings. Extensive grading and sloping done during construction has created a mix of ground elevations around the building. The façade's first or lower level sets about three feet below the grade, but on the south and west elevations the story is about three feet above the grade. The first story is at grade on the building's east elevation, where the original slope appears to have not been substantially disturbed by grading or construction. The interior lower level elevation however is not uniform and the southeast corner sets about two feet above the rest of the story. A set of interior steps must be used to access this area of the building, which originally was the men's jail and bummery.

Facade

The building façade is dominated by the curved portico, which is accessed by a set of stone steps that flare out from the structure, going from about 15 feet wide at the top to nearly 20 feet at the bottom. The building's main entry is on the second story through the portico. Two, 21-foot, Doric columns support the portico roof, with single pilasters located under the portico/wall junction on each wing. The columns rest on four-foot square stone and concrete pedestals that

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 4

<u>Muscatine City Hall</u> Name of Property	<u>Muscatine</u> County
<u>215 Sycamore Street</u> Address	<u>Muscatine</u> City

are set on piers that extend through the portico floor into the crawlspace below. These piers are some of the 223 reinforced concrete pilings that workers drove 25 feet into the ground during construction to support the building ("Muscatine's New City Hall Won Despite Many Obstacles," *Muscatine Journal*, December 12, 1914, Page 1). Copies of the original plans indicate footings extended 11 feet.

The portico columns and pedestals frame the main entry at the top of the stone steps. Three-foot-high concrete walls curve from the pedestals to the wings and enclose the entire front of the portico except for the main entry. The top and front of these walls are faced with stone. Shorter walls with stone coping border the front steps and butt against the columns' pedestals on the portico. A second set of stone blocks provides a ground anchor for the step walls. A single, metal light pole, each with a non-historic, round, frosted glass globe sets on each anchor block. Two pilasters flank the curved main entry, which is crowned with a flat-topped entablature. The existing, double-wide, glass doors are non-historic. There is also a full-width overhead transom. The entablature extends over the entrance and includes a series of triglyphs that stretch across the frieze. Vertical lines have been scored into each triglyph. The architrave also has a set of small beaded dentils that hang directly below the triglyphs. The area under the portico has been excavated to provide an exterior front entrance to the lower level. Originally this area was accessed by two matching sets of concrete steps on either side of the main front steps. Sometime in the 1970s or 1980s, the left set of steps was removed and a handicapped accessible ramp and handrail were installed. The original, lower level, wood entry doors were also removed and a doublewide handicapped accessible, electronic steel door installed.

Wings

The dominant feature of each wing is the large number of windows found on each elevation. Copies of the original plans show the historic windows had one-over-one-light, double-hung sashes. The majority of the current windows have metal combination sashes. The backsides of both wings have been parged up to about 15 feet.

Four pilasters are arranged between the top two rows of windows located in the end wall of each wing. They rest on a sculptured corbel that extends around the building façade and wing ends. Although the corbel continues around the perimeter of the building, its sculptured lower portion is omitted on the backside of the wings and only a slightly raised portion of stone remains in these areas. A second belt course of narrow stone extends out from the building wall above the corbel. This belt extends around the entire perimeter of the building and doubles as the sill for the second row of windows.

Three rows of windows are equally spaced around the façade and the ends of both wings. The top and middle rows include three windows at the end of each wing and four along the front of each wing. Under the portico the fenestration includes three windows in the top row while the second row includes the main entry surrounded by two windows. The fenestration of the lower level row of windows is similar, except they are slightly wider but shorter than the upper level windows. A sunken entry, with a single, glass door, is located in the middle of the east wing's lower level.

The fenestration on the backside of each wing shows several variations from the façade. The east wing has an asymmetrical arrangement that splits the three rows of windows into two uneven sections. The top two rows each contain 10 openings, although not all were opened. The rows are split by a column of various-sized windows that sets about in the middle of the wall. These windows provide natural light to interior stairways. Below this column of windows is an entry that includes a glass door with transom. The lower level originally housed the city's police department, jail and city court system. The existing fenestration continues to show this early use. The original plans and various newspaper reports from that time document the northeast room on this story was used as the women's ward of the city jail and included four windows with bars. The other side was the men's ward and contained two windows on the east elevation. There was another window in the original marshall's office, which is now a storeroom.

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 5

<u>Muscatine City Hall</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Name of Property	County
<u>215 Sycamore Street</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Address	City

The existing fenestration on the west wing's south elevation remains relatively similar to the original plans. The major change on this side is the addition of a hinged metal fire escape that has been attached to the structure's side. The window arrangements in particular follow the same general trend as found around the rest of the structure. There is a basic set of three window rows with 10 potential openings in each row. Some of the openings are blind. The top row contains eight windows. Another opening contains a steel door that accesses the fire escape and the far west opening is blind. The fenestration of the middle row has ten windows, with one window functioning as a fire escape access. The bottom row matches the other two rows with 10 potential openings. An entry with a single glass door and transom is located in the third space from the west. The original plans show it as only slightly above the existing grade. However, it now is located about three feet above the grade. To the right of this door are two glass block windows. The building plans show these windows with double-hung sashes. The right window is barred in the plans and an exterior examination confirms repairs have been made where the bars would have been located. The left window was not barred. This would indicate some type of interior remodeling has been done, since both windows now open to the same room, a lower level men's restroom that contains the basement access door. To the right of these windows are five additional window openings. The original plans show these units were barred, double-hung windows. The building plans show the first two openings provided light to what originally was used as a bummery, while the other three, along with two windows on the east elevation, provided light for the men's ward of the jail. All of these windows were originally barred. The top portion of one window still has the original bars, and these now function as a support for the attached fire escape.

Other openings on the west wing's south elevation include three casement window units that open to the basement. All the windows have been covered over, although the far east opening does have a vent installed in its cover. The building plans indicate this was a vent for some of the original heating equipment. The plans also show a casement window at the far right of the building. This opening was covered and parged when that activity was conducted. Five other vents are scattered below several of the windows.

All of the historic double-hung, wood windows have been replaced with combination, double-hung, steel units.

Roof/Cornice

The building's roofline is highlighted by a copper entablature that extends around the full perimeter of the structure. The entire entablature appears to have been painted black, although on the backside of the structure, its more natural patina is clearly visible on its underside. Current local officials report this painting was done in the mid-1990s when the building was repointed and other restoration work completed. A drainage system has been incorporated into the entablature, although PCV pipes have replaced the original downspouts.

Two limestone belt courses are located about two feet below the entablature. The top belt course is a three-inch limestone band that runs around the entire building, including the portico. This band sets on top and extends over the second belt, a 14-inch course of limestone that actually forms the bottom line of stone cladding on the portico. A parapet extends several feet above the entablature and surrounds the building's flat roof. The parapet of the curved portico is shaped with short stair-step segments that are centered across the portico's top. Two belt courses are also located on the parapet. Although these match the widths of the belts located below the entablature, they are not located adjacent to each other as the lower belts are. The lower, 14-inch belt on the parapet is located at the top of the entablature, while its three-inch companion band is just below the top of the parapet and separated from the lower parapet band by an estimated 20-inch wide strip of stone cladding. The top parapet band matches the stair-step pattern of the parapet over the portico.

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 6

<u>Muscatine City Hall</u> Name of Property	<u>Muscatine</u> County
<u>215 Sycamore Street</u> Address	<u>Muscatine</u> City

Interior

Walls and Materials

According to the original design and historic newspaper reports, the interior load bearing walls of the structure are of solid brick while the remaining interior walls are hollow tile. All the surfaces of the interior walls are plastered. Both the interior floors and the roof are flat slabs of reinforced concrete. A rubberized covering now encloses the original roof, which could not be determined. The interior floors are finished cement (now carpeted) in the various offices and terrazzo in the corridors. All interior woodwork is hardwood. Most of the interior rooms have 13-foot high ceilings. Several of the original doors and transoms remain, although individual suites of offices have been established by installing glass door units with surrounding transoms and sidelights.

Foundation/Basement

Two main basement rooms, each with approximately 13-foot-tall ceilings, are located beneath the junction of the two wings. These areas have traditionally housed the building's heating units and provided maintenance storage. The single access door to the basement is located in a first-story (lower level) restroom and leads to a three-foot-wide stairway that takes a 90° turn to the right before descending several more feet into one of the main basement rooms. A short (43") wood door is located along the stairway's left side where it makes the 90° turn. This doorway provides access to a nearly six-foot-tall crawlspace that extends under the portico and wing extensions. While the basement floor is finished concrete, the crawlspace is dirt. Within the crawlspace are pillars and footings that support the portico. There is no exterior entrance to the basement or crawlspace, except for a former coal chute located on the backside of the right (west) wing. The foundation is poured cement.

Alterations

There have been two major and several minor interior alterations of the original plans to accommodate changing uses for the building over the last 90 years. Although the structure was constructed as a city hall, the original design incorporated a number of uses that are no longer associated with city activities. The areas originally assigned to these uses have been annexed by city activities that remain headquartered at city hall, but have outgrown their original spaces. However, many of the original elements however remain. These include twin five-foot wide, iron stairways that curl up both front interior walls from the lower story to the front entrance's mid-level landing. The treads of the stairway are slate. A common stairway provides access from the front entrance's mid-story landing to the second story. The stairways' balustrades are constructed of a hardwood handrail supported by a lattice of iron balusters. The second story contains a central corridor that provides access to each wing of the building and the suite of offices located in them. The central corridor also provides access to the city council chambers.

Two of the most substantial alternation included the installation of an elevator to provide handicap accessibility and the removal of the city jail from the lower level. The city jail removal was completed between 1975-1976 when a new public safety facility was built. Eight detention cells were removed in the men's ward, as well as a common holding cell or bummery, a three-cell women's unit and a juvenile detention room. Several small office rooms that were used by the city police department, a police courtroom and other facilities were also remodeled to accommodate new uses. The renovation required several wall portions to be removed and replaced, creating new offices, especially for the city's parks and recreation department. The renovation also provided a new meeting room and an improved break area for the staff. Ceilings in the renovated areas were also lowered through grids and ceiling panels. These changes all occurred on the lower level.

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 7

<u>Muscatine City Hall</u> Name of Property	<u>Muscatine</u> County
<u>215 Sycamore Street</u> Address	<u>Muscatine</u> City

The installation of an elevator also caused major interior changes and required the loss of one room on each of the three primary building levels. Nearly every room in the city hall has undergone changes to accommodate new uses. This has included removal of some walls, construction of new walls and other changes. As previously noted, the original staircases and general corridor layout remains intact. The central corridor provides access to the city council chambers. Remodeling here has removed the original main opening to the chamber. There has also been some remodeling of office space in each wing.

The basement has undergone few changes. Most have been modifications to reflect changing electrical, mechanical and other building systems technology. These have included removal of coal loading and storage facilities, increased electrical capability, steam boiler replacement and similar work. The building originally also included a central vacuum system that was inactivated several years ago, although the vacuum outlets remain throughout the building. These outlets, along with original rooms and other parts of the building, were identified and labeled by a city worker during the late 1980s or early 1990s using reproductions of the original building plans.

Site

Statue of Liberty

A contributing historical feature to the main building is the eight-foot reproduction of the Statue of Liberty in front of the building. It sets on a five-foot-tall stone pedestal that rises from an 11-point stone planter directly in front of the main entry steps. A grass apron, which is surrounded by concrete sidewalks that lead up to the entry steps, encircles the planter. Three flagpoles are arranged around the top of the monument. The flag of the United States flies from the taller middle pole. The flag of the State of Iowa hangs from the smaller pole to its right and the flag of the City of Muscatine is displayed on the smaller pole to the left. The statue was part of a nationwide recognition of the 40th Anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America, erected here in 1950.

Grounds

Historic images show the gently arched sidewalk leading through the site diagonally from the corner of Sycamore and Third streets to an area in front of the main steps. This area contained several walks around a center portion, and additional walks extended from the steps around each wing of the building. This general layout has been preserved. A walk, flared at the corner, lead from the corner of Sycamore and Third streets diagonally into the site to the location of the reproduction Statue of Liberty in front of the main steps. The sidewalk arches around this object, continuing to the steps on the other side. Sidewalk to either wing of the building also begin at this point, with one arching around the end of the north wing and terminating at the alley, and the other arching along the west wing and extending back to Sycamore. This walk has been apparently rerouted as a small parking area has been added to the site on the west side of the west wing.

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 8

<u>Muscatine City Hall</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Name of Property	County
<u>215 Sycamore Street</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Address	City

8. Statement of Significance

The Muscatine City Hall was constructed in 1914-15 during a period of community growth that featured both public and private construction. It appears to qualify individually for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. In addition, the city hall would appear to be a contributing building to a potential downtown historic district under the historical context of Civic Pride and Accomplishment.

The Muscatine City Hill is significant within several patterns of local events. The 1914-15 construction of this structure is in the middle of this period of building improvements throughout the downtown referred to as Civic Pride and Accomplishment. During this period, Muscatine basked in the early boom of the pearl button industry and strove to improve the deteriorated sections of the town. Following the construction of the Muscatine County Courthouse and New Jail and Sheriff's Residence in 1908-09, citizens turned their attention to building a new municipal facility as well. Funded through a bond issue, the election served as the first time that women could vote in Muscatine. The prospect of hundreds of women voting in a public election created questions and concerns for local residents, but the newspaper encouraged the women to exercise their right. Thus, the Muscatine City Hall is appears to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A.

In addition to the significant events that occurred during this project, the Muscatine City Hall is a unique building with no comparable building in the community. The building retains much of its integrity, although its original windows and doors have been replaced. Its Classical Revival features, such as stone cladding; full-height, semi-circular portico; and symmetrical façade are not seen in other public buildings in the community. The flat roof of the curved portico is a design that was unusual on many earlier prototypes of this style. There are also features on the building that show a divergence from the customary Classical Revival theme that enhance its unusual style. Instead of more ornamental Ionic or Corinthian columns, two simple Doric columns support the portico roof. Pilasters are also seen on the façade and the ends of both wings, creating additional ornamentation more characteristically seen with the Beaux Arts style. The building's flat-topped roof and parapet also suggest a Beaux Arts influence. In addition, the close proximity of the city hall to the Muscatine County Courthouse provides a unique opportunity to examine two different styles on two separate government buildings designed by the same architect. The county courthouse was designed by Joseph E. Mills and constructed about five years before the city hall. Thus, the Muscatine City Hall also appears to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C.

A contributing object to the Muscatine City Hall site is the eight-foot reproduction of the Statue of Liberty in front of the building. The statue was part of a nationwide recognition of the 40th Anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America, erected here in 1950. The "Strengthen The Arm Of Liberty" program distributed nearly 300 of the statues to over 39 states and several U.S. overseas possessions and territories from 1949-1951. The Friedley-Voshardt Company, Chicago, Illinois manufactured the statues, which each weighed 290 pounds. There has been a nationwide effort to locate the remaining statues over the past few years, which has identified approximately 100. As a contributing object to the city hall, the Statue of Liberty provides an increased sense of national and local pride that enhances and strengthens the image of the city hall as a public building and available to all members of the community, the state and the nation.

Finally, the city hall appears to be a contributing building to a potential downtown historic district. It strongly falls within one historic context identified for this district: "Civic Pride and Accomplishment, c.1890-c.1925." The 1914-15 construction of this structure in the middle of this period marks the building improvements seen throughout downtown Muscatine. In the previous years, construction of the new county courthouse, county jail, post office, the Hershey Building, and the German-American Building had all occurred. Local citizens were understandably excited about these

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 9

<u>Muscatine City Hall</u> Name of Property	<u>Muscatine</u> County
<u>215 Sycamore Street</u> Address	<u>Muscatine</u> City

developments and the effort to clean up a blighted area of the downtown with a new municipal building was obviously supported by the general population. That support, pride and excitement was not only demonstrated by the referendum, but by the 5000 people who toured the building in November during the grand opening. They recognized its significance and responded to its construction with enthusiasm and pride. The building has continued to meet the public needs of its citizens as the primary seat of community administration and planning. All city commissions meet at the building on a routine basis. The school board also meets in the building, extending its impact beyond just municipal activities. These past and continued uses, combined with its basic structural integrity, qualify the building as a contributing resource to any potential downtown historic district.

History

Muscatine voters approved a \$90,000 bond referendum in 1913 to fund the construction of a new city hall. A state law had been approved earlier that allowed the vote to take place. Prior to 1912, Muscatine and other Iowa special charter cities with a population between 15,000 and 50,000 residents were prohibited from issuing bonds for the construction of municipal buildings. A few months after the Iowa Legislature approved the legislation, the Muscatine City Council was moving forward with the referendum. The push for this change developed because of the city's continued use of a 67-year-old dilapidated structure as the city hall. That building had originally been constructed in 1845 as a church on the northwest corner of Sycamore and Third Streets. By 1912 many community residents were arguing that it was time to leave the old building. The Muscatine Journal called it the "official headquarters" for the huge rat population that was plaguing the downtown at that time ("Rats Infest Entire Business District," *Muscatine Journal*, October 28, 1912, p. 8). Opponents however said the building was "plenty good enough," and argued against replacing it. The issue came to a head in early 1913 when the city council agreed to hold an April 7, 1913 special election to gain voter approval for issuing the bonds.

The election would offer Muscatine not only the first opportunity for a special charter city to fund a public building with bonds, but for the first time in the city women would be voting. Iowa had partially enfranchised women in the mid-1890s with a limited suffrage law that had been upheld by the Supreme Court in 1908. Under it, women could vote in any bond issue election. The April 7, 1913 election gave Muscatine women their first chance to exercise this right. Based on news reports from the Muscatine Journal during this time, the prospect of hundreds of women voting in a public election created questions and concerns for local residents. In an editorial prior to the vote, the Journal attempted to lay these questions to rest and encouraged the women to exercise their right: "On them as much as upon the men of Muscatine rests the responsibility of next Monday's decision; upon those who do not vote as well as upon those who do. Right now is the time for women to realize that enfranchisement, partial or complete, brings not only rights and privileges but responsibilities as well. Every adult woman in Muscatine should go to the polls Monday and register her verdict on the city hall bonds issue" ("The Issue In A Nutshell," *Muscatine Journal*, April 4, 1913, 1).

The issue of women suffrage was not the only concern residents had and the Journal, a clear supporter for the proposal, devoted other editorials before the vote to address other points. One tackled the site selection for the new city hall. The referendum specifically identified a sloping corner lot in the southeast corner of the Sycamore and Third Street intersection as the site for the new city hall. It would be diagonally across the intersection from the existing city hall. Originally identified as Haymarket Square, the lot had been used as an open-air marketplace where local farmers and other residents could sell commodities. Local photographer Oscar Grossheim recorded a portion of the lot with a photo he took around 1912. It shows a parade passing by the area, with automobiles and horse-drawn carriages either parked or traveling over the lot (Grossheim, Photo #664, 1912). The proposed site however created controversy and its selection as the new building site apparently was not finalized until only a few days before the vote.

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 10

<u>Muscatine City Hall</u> Name of Property	<u>Muscatine</u> County
<u>215 Sycamore Street</u> Address	<u>Muscatine</u> City

When the proposal was approved April 7, 1913 on an 1812-1076 vote, the Journal and other supporters were jubilant. "SPIRIT OF PROGRESS AND CIVIC PRIDE DISPLAYED IN OUTCOME OF SPECIAL ELECTION," one headline read in the April 8 edition of the paper ("SPIRIT OF PROGRESS AND CIVIC PRIDE DISPLAYED IN OUTCOME OF SPECIAL ELECTION," *Muscatine Journal*, April 8, 1913, p. 2).

Recalling the controversy over women voting, the next headline read "Despite Fears Which Were Entertained, Support of the Women Was Not Necessary as Vote of Men Shows Majority for the Improvement," the paper pointed out, explaining men had supported the new city hall by a vote of 1178 to 909, while women voted 634 to 167 for the building. A close reading of the accompanying article however indicates the headline may only have been meant to ease male fears of a female electorate usurping the power of the ballot box. According to the report, "women through their votes provided the encouraging majority which was recorded in the general result." The newspaper was even impressed with one statistic involving the female vote. "A remarkable feature about the election which may serve to bring joy to the heart of the suffragette was the rather surprising feature which showed that while the men spoiled 54 ballots, the women cast but 17 ballots which were found to be defective," the paper reported in the same issue. Since the percentage of difference in the number of spoiled ballots between men and women was only 0.2%, the newspaper may have been trying to pull a statistical slight-of-hand with that report. The vote did demonstrate the potential power of women voters in future elections and helped maintain the momentum that would eventually lead to universal suffrage ("Despite Fears Which Were Entertained, Support of the Women Was Not Necessary as Vote of Men Shows Majority for the Improvement," *Muscatine Journal*, April 8, 1913, p. 2).

The vote appeared to settle the city hall issue and the city council quickly moved forward with planning for the new building. Four days after the vote, the Journal reported that architects were visiting the city daily. A Davenport firm, Temple and Burrows and Chicago architect Louis Vade visited with the council on April 11, 1913 and showed members designs they had developed. The contract however was offered to J.E. Mills, Detroit, Michigan, during the council's June 16 meeting. Henry Zeidler, local architect, was informally named the construction superintendent. Mills had earlier designed the Muscatine County Courthouse, county jail and the First National Bank building, all in Muscatine ("Mills As Architect For The City Hall," *Muscatine Journal*, June 17, 1912, p. 7).

Although it only took Mills five weeks to develop the proposed plans for the new city hall, simmering controversy over the proposed building site and other issues continued to dog the project. In spite of that, the project continued to move forward and on January 29, 1914, 11 contractors provided bids for the work. George W. Stiles Company, Chicago, submitted the low bid of \$67,819. ("Council Receives City Hall Figures," *Muscatine Journal*, January 29, 1914).

Following a review of the bids by the architect, a conditional contract, subject to the sale of bonds, was awarded to the George W. Stiles Company on January 29. With options and other adjustments, the contracted amount came to \$72,114. Everything now seemed on tract for some type of groundbreaking ceremony within a few days. That all changed the next week however after officials with the bonding company reported the public notice for the April 1913 bond referendum might have been faulty. A permanent injunction was eventually issued and the bond referendum was voided ("Grant Injunction In City Hall Case," *Muscatine Journal*, February 28, 1914). The effort to construct a new city hall had to begin over.

The council moved quickly and agreed at its April 24 meeting to set a new referendum for May 19, with voters to choose the site. The referendum date was later changed to June 2 and three sites were listed. These included the present city hall location at that time, the Haymarket Square and the Baptist Church site at the corner of Fourth and Sycamore. The bond issue would be limited to \$90,000 regardless of the site selected. The bond issue passed its second test on June 2, when voters approved it on a 1285-966 vote. The Haymarket Square received the most support as the preferred site ("Hall Bond Issue Carries: Will Build On Hay Market Site," *Muscatine Journal*, June 3, 1914).

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 11

<u>Muscatine City Hall</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Name of Property	County
<u>215 Sycamore Street</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Address	City

At a special June 5 meeting the council approved a bond issuance contract with Bechtel and agreed to hold a new bid letting on July 8, 1914 for the project. Five bids for the work were received by the city. After reviewing the bid alternates, the council awarded the contract to James H. Selden, Muscatine. With the options selected by the city, his bid was \$69,777 compared to a \$71,789 bid from Stiles Construction. ("Muscatine Man Awarded Contract," *Muscatine Journal*, July 9, 1914).

Ground breaking for the new city hall was held at the construction site on July 16, 1914. Work progressed well through the remainder of the summer, but it was not until a special city council session on June 28, 1915, that the building was accepted. The total bill for the building was \$88,293.28. The bond referendum had been for \$90,000, meaning the city had about \$1,700 remaining. Officials agreed to put the money into a special fund and use it for additional furnishings, building repairs or similar need (\$1500 Remaining In The City Hall Fund," *Muscatine Journal*, July 31, 1915).

Formal dedication ceremonies were held November 1, 1915. The Journal reported that an estimated 5000 people swarmed through the building from 7 p.m. to after 10 p.m. in an effort to tour its new offices and chambers. The 22-member Muscatine Concert Band provided musical entertainment in the council chambers for several hundred visitors. Local residents and out-of-town visitors all praised the new structure and found themselves accepting the new building with a feeling of civic pride, the Journal reported ("Muscatine's New City Hall Formally Opened," *Muscatine Journal*, November 2, 1915).

The significance of the building has not diminished over the last 89 years. It continues to be the primary seat of municipal local operations and the site for nearly all local legislative and administrative functions that affect people in and around the community. It provides the symbol of local government and the place where nearly all citizens have an opportunity to express a viewpoint directly to their representatives. When 5000 people attended the dedication in 1915 they recognized that significance and the effect it would generate in the future. It's an effect that continues to be significant today. Both bond referendums that voters approved to fund the project marked important steps in local women suffrage efforts in Muscatine. Both votes marked the first time women had voted in a community election, and although there apparently was some concern over such things as the safety of women who voted, there were no reports of physical intimidation or other efforts to confront these new voters. Although universal suffrage was still several years away, the votes in Muscatine marked a significant event in the community

An addition to the city hall site was made in 1950 when an eight-foot reproduction of the Statue of Liberty was erected in front of the building. The statue was a gift to the city as part of a nationwide recognition conducted by the Boy Scouts of America in recognition of the organization's 40th anniversary. The Muscatine statue was dedicated in 1950. According to an on-line report by BSA Troop 101, Cheyenne, Wyoming, the "Strengthen The Arm Of Liberty" program distributed nearly 300 of the statues to over 39 states and several U.S. overseas possessions and territories from 1949-1951 ("Replica Statue of Liberty Search," accessed on-line 2004). The project was the brainchild of Jack Whitaker, a Kansas City, Mo. Scout volunteer. The Friedley-Voshardt Company, Chicago, Illinois manufactured the statues by assembling 42 sheets of stamped copper around a wooden frame. According to the on-line report, each statue weighed 290 pounds and originally cost \$300 to \$350 plus freight.

Several of the statues have already been listed on the National Register for their individual significance. There is also a nationwide effort to locate the remaining statues. In a September 2003 article for American Profile, Marti Attoun reported the SOS! (Save Outdoor Sculpture) has accounted for around 100 of the statues ("Restoring the Little Sisters of Liberty," *American Profile*, accessed online, 2004). SOS! is a joint project of Heritage Preservation and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The Muscatine piece is in excellent condition, although its original

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 12

<u>Muscatine City Hall</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Name of Property	County
<u>215 Sycamore Street</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Address	City

patina has been covered with gold paint. The city repaired wiring in the statue in 2002 that allowed the statue's beacon to shine again after several years of darkness.

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Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 13

Muscatine City Hall
Name of Property

Muscatine
County

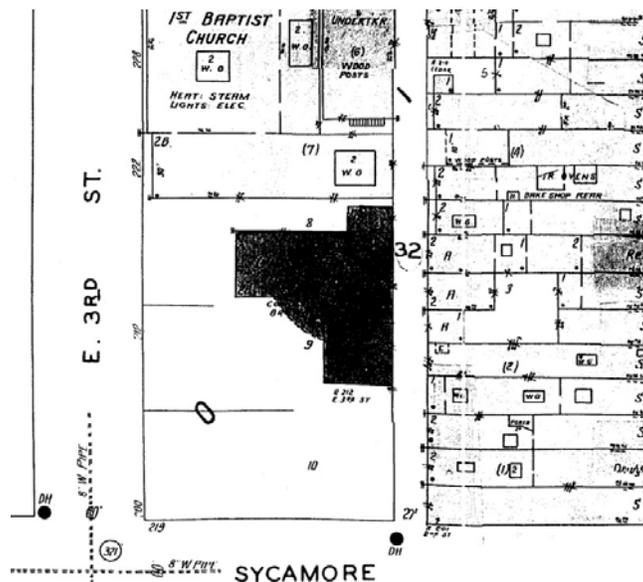
215 Sycamore Street
Address

Muscatine
City

Location map



Plan (from 1946 Sanborn map)



Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 14

Muscatine City Hall
Name of Property

Muscatine
County

215 Sycamore Street
Address

Muscatine
City

Historical postcard of building – postmarked 1924



Photograph of building (digital image)

